

MASSACHUSETTS RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

BROOM CROWBERRY

(Corema Conradii Torr.)

DESCRIPTION

Broom Crowberry, a low growing, bushy evergreen shrub (seldom greater than 10 inches (25 cm.) in height) appears as bright green mounds, densely branched and covered with tiny leaves ($1/8$ to $1/4$ " long). Small, purple or reddish flowers without petals are borne in terminal heads and are subtended by one or more bracts. The dry, fleshy, spherical fruit is less than an $1/2$ inch (1.5 mm.) in diameter and does not open at maturity. Broom Crowberry blooms between March and May.

SIMILAR SPECIES IN MASSACHUSETTS

Hudsonia ericoides, although similar in appearance to Corema conradii remains dull green in winter while Corema is brownish in color. In summer, the new growth of Hudsonia is dark green separating it from the yellow-green color of Corema. Also in March and early April, Hudsonia has yellow flowers and Corema has inconspicuous reddish or purple ones. Corema can also be confused with true heather Calluna or Erica, but in late summer both of these species have pink/lavender flowers

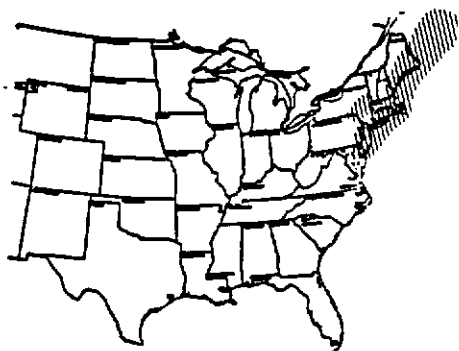


Britton, N.L. and N.A. Brown. An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada. Dover Publications, Inc. 1970 reprint of 1913 ed.

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

Broom Crowberry often occurs in few to several clumps or in scattered patches in low shrub or moor communities, inhabiting very dry, sandy flats. In other locales, this plant inhabits dry pitch pine/scrub oak barrens, relic sand dunes,

(continued overleaf)



Distribution of Broom Crowberry



● Verified since 1978
○ Reported prior to 1978

Distribution in Massachusetts by Town

BROOM CROWBERRY (continued)

areas long ago grazed, and road bed embankments. Broom Crowberry often colonizes open areas created by human and natural disturbances. Other species which co-occur with Broom Crowberry include Quercus ilicifolia (Scrub Oak), Pinus rigidus (Pitch Pine), Hudsonia ericoides (Golden Heather) and Arctostaphylos Uva-ursi (Bearberry).

RANGE

Distribution is mostly coastal, Newfoundland south to New Jersey and Corema Conradii can also be found in Ulster Co., New York.

POPULATION STATUS

In Massachusetts, Broom Crowberry is considered a species of "Special Concern". Thirty nine current occurrences (1978 to present) were reported and twelve historical records (prior to 1978) have been recorded. Factors influencing rarity include fire suppression and the cessation of grazing which allows shrubs, Scrub Oak and Pitch Pine to become established, crowding out and shading Broom Crowberry.